

DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Program

Program Interpretation on 100% Certification Requirement for Dwelling Units in Multifamily Buildings

December 1, 2022

Background:

DOE Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) program partners have requested clarification on whether the ZERH Version 1 National Program Requirements (Revisions 7 and 8) require that **all** dwelling units and sleeping units in a multifamily building are ZERH-certified in order for the project to be certified.

Response & Rationale:

In a multifamily building the ZERH V1 certification applies to the entire building including all individual dwelling units and sleeping units. There are several reasons for this:

- The ZERH program promotes a systems-based approach to energy efficiency and whole-house or whole-building performance. Under this approach common spaces of the building, and not just the dwelling/sleeping units, are covered by the program specifications such as energy efficiency and indoor air quality measures. Allowing some but not all dwelling units to certify under ZERH would be inconsistent with this whole-building approach.
- The ZERH program prerequisite for ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (ESMFNC) certification requires compliance of all dwelling units in a building. Allowing some but not all dwelling units to certify under ZERH would be inconsistent with this approach.
- The program's recognition resources for ZERH projects highlight the benefits of living in ZERH certified homes, such as reduced energy costs and improved comfort and indoor air quality. The program intends that these benefits will apply to all dwelling units in a multifamily building and not just select units, which underscores the importance of certifying all units to ZERH.

Therefore, this interpretation clarifies that under the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Version 1 National Program Requirements (Rev 7 and Rev 8), all dwelling units and sleeping units within a multifamily building must be certified in order for the project to be ZERH certified. This interpretation also applies to dwelling units and sleeping units in a multifamily building certified under the DOE ZERH Version 1 California Program Requirements (Rev 7 and Rev 8) based on the same rationale.